

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, February 14. 1712.

WE are now blest with the first Demands of the *French* at the Treaty of Peace, and as I expected always, so I doubt not you will find it, the high Proposals Please you all.

But I wonder a little you cannot allow to the *French*, what you allow all to one another: I take the King of *France* in this Treaty, to be like an *English Horse-Courser*, who tho' he brings the worst Jade in his Stable out to sell to you, dresses him out as fine as he can, makes him Caper and Dance, and Flatter about, and then asks a swelling great Price for him. For,

says he, I can fall when I will, but I can never rise.

I know some peevish Customers are apt to say, I won't talk with you, you are so much out of the Way, I'll bid you nothing, and away they go in a Fleet; yet generally I observe it, such People come about again too, for there is perhaps something in the Horse which they like, and they are willing to have him, if they could get him wth Pennyworth; and so they come again, and as the Dealer will come down, and the Gaming Jockey, pleas'd to see them come, and as willing to sell his Horse, as they can be to buy, and much more, comes down a little,

tle, and then a little more, till at last he comes to the Buyer's own Price — And may be, may have put the Cheat upon them too — But *Caveat Emptor*, that is their Business to look to, not his.

But now, Gentlemen, since this Treaty of *Utrecht* is become a Horse-Fair — We have a Horse to sell there, as well as the King of *France*, and our Horse is to be brought out into the Fair the 4th of *March*, it seems — And do you think we do not know how to set a Price upon our Horse, as well as the King of *France* does upon his? *I cannot be at all afraid of that.*

Now the great Business will be, how we shall, as the Saying is, *set our Horses together*, for these Horses are to come to a Truck at last — It has been a Dispute among the Criticks some Time; and Authors do not Agree to this Day, how the Learned have determin'd it, *viz.* What is the true Derivation or Etymology of the Word *Horse-Courser*? Some will have it to signify a Rider of Horses, a fine Horse being in former Days call'd a *Courser*; others, a Rider of Races, the Ground mark'd out for such Things; being to this Day call'd a *Course*; as the Mile-Course, and the five-Mile Course, and the four-Mile-Course, &c. at *New-Market*, and other Places.

But in my Opinion, we have a clearer Account of this Ancient Word from among our Country Jockeys, than any of our Searchers into Language can give us — In the *West Country*, when two Men exchange one Thing for another, they are said to *Scourse* them; if one Man has a Horse to sell, and another a Horse to sell, and they cannot adjust the Price; come, says *Jack to Tom*, I'll *Scourse* with you, that is, Change with you; thus these Horse Merchants driving frequently this Trade of *Scourfing*, were call'd *Horse-Scourfers*, or Changers of Horses: often buying and selling one for the other.

At the great Horse-Market yonder at *Utrecht*, they are all *Scourfers*; whether *Horse-Scourfers* or *Peace-Scourfers*, it's all one to me, I won't stand with you for that — One makes his Price, and the other

makes his Price, and both Sides will not want to ask enough, and if they can Jockey one another, to be sure they will; but yet I am of the Opinion, they will set their Horses together at last, for all that.

France is a Cunning Jockey, and he makes his Horse set the best Leg foremost, puts on all his Trappings and fine Gear, and asks a Confounded great Price for him — But he knows him a Jade at Bottom, and as he is come to Market with him, and he sees the Buyers are met, he'll never carry him back again, he'll sell him if it be possible; and that which is worse for him, the Buyers know the Defects of the Horse too, which will cause them to bid the less for him — and I must say farther, it is well for us that they do, for they are in the less Danger of being Cheated; and if they buy a Jade Dear, it is their own Fault.

Again, we carry a good Horse to Market, the King of *France* knows him to be so, and has certainly a Mind to have him, and will not slip his Opportunity; if he can help it; only in general, *And who can blame him?* He would get him as Cheap as he can.

Now the only Mischief in this Bargain, is this; We have a great many Partners in this Horse, and it is to be fear'd they should not all Agree about *What to ask for him?* Some say he is a dear Horse to us, has cost us a great deal of Money for keeping, and we are willing to sell him, tho' we take but a Moderate Price for him; others go farther, and say, I would keep the Horse, but my Partners do not act fairly, for they do not pay their Share of Stable-Rent, nor send in their Proportion of Hay and Oats, and I can't keep him all myself, therefore I'll sell rather for what I can get, than go on thus; if they'll come to a Square for the future, and pay what I am out for Horse-keeping for Time past, I'll keep him with all my Heart, or else I'll e'en let him go for what I can get.

On the other Hand, others who have a Share in the Horse too, they like him; he has run several Races for them, and won them

them great Sums of Money, and by the Trick abovesaid, cost them but little keeping, and they set a prodigious Price upon him, and indeed are not pleas'd that he is carried to Market, for they would not sell him at all.

And here lies all the Danger, lest these Owners should not Agree, and so the French Jockey may bubble them out of the

Horse at last; that is, that these People out-standing their Market, one won't keep the Horse, and t'other won't keep the Horse, till he is starv'd among them, sinks in his Flesh, and the Enemy gets him at last, so little or nothing.

This is my Caveat to the Treasurers.

MISCELLANEA.

IN my last, I enter'd a little into the Case of the poor Keel-Men of *Newcastle*; a Case now depending before the House of Commons, but Represented to that Honourable House in so different a Shape from what it really bears, that I could not but lay open so much of it, which I esteem to be fairly cover'd, and which I believe will appear the blackest Design that has ever been seen of the kind in this Nation; and let them stand clear that are Concern'd in it.

First I shall state their Case in brief, and then make some just Remarks upon it.

The poor Men have for some Years past, by a Voluntary Agreement among themselves, rais'd and paid a little constant Payment of one Penny per Tide out of their Labour, when they are in Work, in order to make a Common Stock, for the Support of their own Poor, burying their Dead, providing for the Widows and Orphans of such as Perish in the River, as many of them frequently do, and feeding the Ancient disabled Poor among them, as they come to want it.

With this Money, they have built a very noble Hospital, the Finest and Handsomest of its kind in this Nation to be sure, if not in the World; and which, as I have been told, cost above 2000*l*. Building; a

very good Testimony what great Things a little good Husbandry may do.

For want of Authority to Manage this Matter, and of Power and Unity among themselves to direct and govern this Charity, they have run into great Mischiefs; their Stewards, their Receivers and Managers have Embezell'd the Money, Cheated the Common Stock, Starved the Poor, and there is no Way to bring them to Account, but by obtaining a Charter of Incorporation, whereby the poor Men may be Empower'd to direct their own Charity, and to call to Account those that Cheat them.

To obtain this, they Petition'd her Majesty for a Charter, which Petition was Signed by above one Thousand of their Names, and being Presented to the Queen in Council, was, on the 10th of April last, refer'd to the *Attorney General*, to Enquire into, and Consider of.

The Hoast-Men and Fitters of *New-Castle*, Eminent and Famous for their late Combinations with the Lighter-Men of *London*, for Engrossing the Coal-Trade, and whose said Combinations were, but the last Session of this present Parliament, Suppress'd by a Law, finding it very necessary to have the Governing Power, not only of the poor Keel-Men's Money, but of the Keel-Men themselves, in order to restore the Projected Practice of Engrossing the Coals, had for many Years endeavour'd to

get

get the Disposition of this Charity into their Hands ; and had used infinite Frauds and corrupt Dealings, to bring the poor Men to Consent to it, but in vain.

But finding it was now like to come to a Period, and that if this New Charter were obtain'd, not only many of them should be call'd to an Account for Embezzling, and Fraudulently keeping back the Poor's Money, by which several of them have been personally Starv'd, and have Perish'd for meer want of Bread : BUT their farther Designs of getting the Absolute Command of the Keel Men, and thereby of the whole Coal Trade, as above, would be Overthrown and Disappointed ; these *Hoast-Men* and *Fislers* bring in the Magistrates of *New-castle* to join with them, many of themselves being also Magistrates, to enter a Caveat against the said Charter, at the *Attorney General's* pretending, That the Majority of the Keel-Men had sign'd a Petition against

it, and had resolv'd to apply to the Parliament, to have the Government of the said Hospital and Charity committed to them.

The Truth of this Sham, the Horrid and Barbarous Methods made use of, to draw off the poor Men from their first Petition ; how they prevail'd with a few, and how few ; and what they are now doing to procure more, this black Story I leave to our next, when I shall also give you the Petition itself.

Mean Time, I only recommend it to the Consideration of all whom It may Concern, whether it can be likely the poor Keel-Men should willingly Petition to be under the Government and Direction of those, who are the very Men that have oppress'd them, and who they desire nothing more, than sufficient Power, to call to an Account for the Injuries they have already receiv'd from them.

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